

American Opinion Summary

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RUSSIA AND CUBA

The President's brief televised report on developments in regard to Cuba draws a mixed reaction, but neither those who welcome it nor those who criticize it assume that the crisis is over.

The report of progress is welcomed by a number of editors (e.g. Balt. Sun, N.Y. Times, Phila. Inquirer). The Philadelphia Inquirer sees in it "heartening indication that a peaceful solution may be achieved," but says: "It is necessary, as the President warned, to keep our guard up."

President Kennedy's statement "gave definitive reassurance to the public that at least part of Premier Khrushchev's agreement is being carried out," the New York Times comments, adding: "But many questions remain." The Times asserts that "the difficulties have been inordinately multiplied by Castro's stubborn recalcitrance."

"President Kennedy put the best light possible on the Cuban situation," Scripps Howard's Washington News says. With reference to international inspection, the News asserts that "a key promise of Khrushchev has not been kept," either the U.S. or Cuba "is being kidded." The News adds: "President Kennedy properly announced both the blockade and air surveillance will be continued."

A few are more critical. The President's report gave Hearst's New York Journal-American "the feeling that the American people are being spoon-fed a precisely-measured mixture of assurance and information." The "spoon-feeding included only passing mention of the need for an inspection system," and "made no mention at all of a deadline," this paper says.

The Washington Star asserts that it is "not necessary to examine the fine print" in the President's statement to understand that the U.S. "has backed down in the face of Fidel Castro's refusal to do what he had been expected to do."

There is widespread agreement as to the need for reliable inspection of the missile withdrawal. The U.S. "will have to continue its own inspection as long as necessary," the St. Louis Post-Dispatch says, but "it would be desirable to internationalize the inspection if possible, under the auspices of either the U.N. or the O.A.S.*"

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(Contd.)

Scripps-Howard's Washington News holds that our "check system by air" and the blockade must be continued, and "if Khrushchev does not deliver on his inspection promise shortly, more effective measures must be taken."

According to the New York Herald Tribune, definite assurance that the missile dismantling "will be carried out completely can come only from effective international inspections." The Herald Tribune suggests that if any agency other than the UN is to be involved, "it is up to the United States government to make absolutely certain that inspection is complete and thorough."

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